

# TSNNotes

A publication of the **American Trauma Society**  
Fall 2014

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## NextSteps Online

### Resources for Recovery

The Trauma Survivors Network has been dedicated to connecting those who have experienced a traumatic injury with other for over six years now. During that time, NextSteps, a program that was once only offered in-person at participating Trauma Centers, is now offered online.

NextSteps Online is an interactive program to help survivors manage their life after a serious injury. It will help explore the ways life has changed and how to move forward.

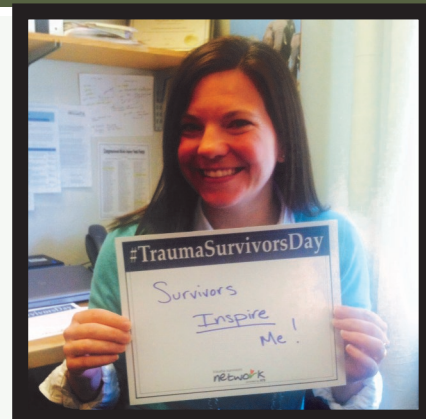
Before an injury, survivors were on their own path in life, one that they expected to continue. However, injuries can change those plans and they may find themselves dealing with uncertainty.

Recovery can be difficult. NextSteps will help survivors understand where they are on the road to recovery, help them figure out where it is they want to go, and help them develop the skills to get there.



In NextSteps, participants will work through a series of lessons and have the opportunity to share their experiences and learn from others who are facing similar challenges. It will help them take control of their situation and become more active in their recovery. It uses techniques that have been scientifically proven to increase self confidence and feelings of empowerment.

We invite all survivors interested in NextSteps Online to explore the [website](#) to find out more and hear from others that have taken the class. Our next class will begin on October 30th. If you are a health care provider or family member that would like to learn more about NextSteps Online, please feel free to contact Elizabeth Wysocki at [ewysock2@jhu.edu](mailto:ewysock2@jhu.edu).



Dear Reader,

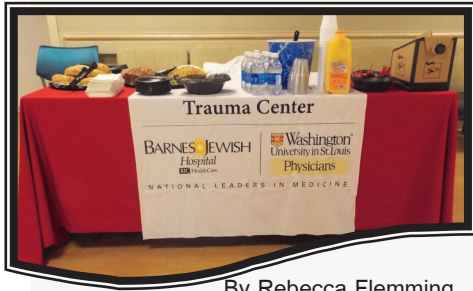
Welcome to the Fall Edition of TSNNotes, a newsletter of the American Trauma Society's Trauma Survivors Network. As the National TSN Coordinator, I am pleased to continue to report that the TSN grows in both strength and numbers.

In this edition we report on NextSteps Online and feature the story of Chris Prange-Morgan, a trauma survivor from Froedtert Health in Milwaukee, WI. We also feature a piece on family class at Barnes Jewish, special guests at the TSN Support Group at Wake Forest Baptist Health and an interview with the TSN Coordinators at Inova Trauma Center in Falls Church, VA.

Please enjoy this edition of TSNNotes, and remember, feedback and questions are always welcome!

**Elizabeth Wysocki, MS**  
National TSN Coordinator

## New TSN Member, Barnes Jewish Hospital, Supports Families



By Rebecca Flemming

Barnes Jewish is pleased to begin offering trauma families support with the Snack and Chat. We had our first on one August 1<sup>st</sup> and we had a great turnout. Families were able to connect with each other as well as our staff. It was a great opportunity to meet the families on their level and talk them through what they are experiencing and provide resources. We are looking forward to our next Snack and Chat, where we are expanding it to two different floors within our facility.



For more information about the TSN at Barnes Jewish Hospital please visit our website [www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org](http://www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org)

# Wake Forest Baptist Health TSN Support Group Welcomes Special Guests

Survivors and family members who attended the August 2014 support group at Wake Forest Baptist Health welcomed some very special guests from the Wake Forest Baptist Health AirCare team. Seen below, the largest helicopter of the fleet was flown in the night of the group and members were able to tour the medical helicopter, chat with the flight crew and hear about just what it takes to care for a critically injured individual in that environment. The group was a big hit for the survivors, the family members and even the AirCare crew themselves! Also pictured are the support group members and AirCare crew in attendance that night and Mark Richardson a survivor who was airlifted after his injury with 3 members of the AirCare service.



## JOIN THE TSN TEAM!

Interested in establishing a TSN Chapter in your trauma center?

Call the ATS at 800-556-7890, or email us at [coordinator@traumasurvivorsnetwork.org](mailto:coordinator@traumasurvivorsnetwork.org)

Please also visit our websites for membership information and to learn more about the TSN

[www.amtrauma.org](http://www.amtrauma.org)

[www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org](http://www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org)

### Find Us!

Facebook: [Trauma Survivors Network](https://www.facebook.com/TraumaSurvivorsNetwork) Twitter: [@TraumaSurvivors](https://twitter.com/TraumaSurvivors)

Instagram: [traumasurvivors](https://www.instagram.com/traumasurvivors)

# An Interview with Brenda Lynne & Melissa Porrey about TSN Community Presentations

## What prompted you to begin bringing the TSN members into the community for these presentations?

Community presentations began several years ago, even before we were part of the TSN program. Dr. Anna Bradford, who began our program back in the 90s and called it “Rebuild,” noticed a need for survivors to talk about their stories as a way to educate others and for community members to learn about what really happens during recovery from traumatic injury. The presentations started out small and quickly grew once it became evident that this type of learning is hugely beneficial, both for survivors and for those who get to hear the trauma stories.

## What is the focus of your presentations?

The focus of these presentations is to get the audience to think a little deeper about

trauma and to learn about the person behind the injury. During a presentation, the focus is on the learner. We want them to leave with a strong understanding of how it feels to be that person who was in a car crash, or who had a fall, or who was hit by a bus, and often the audience members have had their own trauma history, so the presentations are also about making connections and developing empathy.

## What kinds of groups do you present to?

We present to a wide variety of audiences. The most common groups are first responders, nursing students, and social work students. We’ve also presented to flight responders, high school students, trauma externs, physical and occupational therapists, and more.

## How important is this work to the TSN Community?

The importance of these presentations is two-fold. It’s important for the community to understand what truly happens to a person from the moment of trauma through their long-term recovery. The stories they hear stick with them for a long time, and our hope is that they think about trauma victims as more than just patients, but as people with homes and jobs and families who have a long recovery journey ahead of them. The presentations are also important for the trauma survivors, as they give them the chance to educate through personal experience, to process and organize their thoughts around what they’ve been through, and also to say “thank you” to those who choose to dedicate their lives to healing and helping others.

*Pictured below you will find the many groups that have benefited from the TSN Community Presentations.*



# Survivor's Corner

## TRAUMA SURVIVOR CHRIS PRANGE-MORGAN TALKS ABOUT HER TRAUMA AND THE LESSONS SHE HAS LEARNED

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011, after an intense morning of working with my son and his autism therapy team, I decided to go into our local climbing gym, with my 4 year old son in-tow. I was a typical stressed-out mom...spinning in lots of directions, trying to manage child and self-care, and climbing was one of my ways of de-stressing and being active. I remember walking into the gym and saying to the guy behind the desk: "Alex, I'm gonna do some speed climbing today...I have a lot to do today." There was a new route that I saw, and after checking to be sure my kiddo was doing okay, I set out to climb it...not realizing that I had forgotten to clip into the auto-belay system. About 30 feet up, I lunged to reach a hold and fell straight down, sending the forces through my ankle, pelvis, and back. I remember clearly, laying on the floor lamenting how I could not believe I had made such a dire mistake and how stressed out I was, while we waited for the ambulance to arrive. I spent that winter in-and-out of the hospital with healing complications necessitating a tissue-transfer on my leg, and the next two years undergoing an additional 10 limb-salvage surgeries. On January 9th, 2014, I made the decision to have a below-the-knee amputation to regain my quality of life as an active person, and have been adjusting to the "new normal" as an amputee



**The accomplishment of *surviving* and making it through an arduous recovery experience is something I'm prouder of than anything I have ever done.** The learnings and intentions that have come out of my recovering experience are three-fold. ***I have realized...***

***We need each other.*** We cannot get better while being alone with our thoughts (in fact, being alone with our thoughts, pain and disability is a sure recipe for depression.) We need folks who have "walked the walk", so-to-speak, as encouragers while we move ahead in our *new normal* lives. The power of pain and disability to usurp one's life-energy, determination, and will cannot be overstated. It needs to be met head-on with a warrior-like spirit and kindred souls on the recovering journey.

***Our bodies are meant to move. We feel and heal better if we remain active.*** This is particularly challenging when faced with pain and disability, which is why it is hugely important for medical institutions and other organizations to implement programs targeted toward helping persons recovering from injuries (and newly acquired disability) remain active in whatever ways we are able. We need to feel "normal" along with other folks facing physical challenges...as we gain strength, connect and learn how to enjoy being active in a new way.

**The concept of "trauma" can be seen as an invitation to live a life which is more holistic, less hurried, and more connected.** As I look back on my accident, *I am acutely aware of the fact that I was: 1) Distracted and in a hurry, 2) stressed, and 3) goal-driven.* This is NOT unlike the majority of the population in America, and I have used it as a "wake up call" to the things in life that are important. It has helped me to take a look at who I am and what I can bring to help those around me to regain hope, meaning and purpose. I realize that slowing down and deep connection are challenging in the reality of our world today, but I think both are super-important and something to strive for.

## MAKING STIDES AT FROEDTERT HEALTH

It is not often where we are able to look back in life and realize how much gain there can be in loss. **I may have lost a part of my body, but I have gained the status of "survivor," which I share with a group of amazing and strong individuals.** I have gained an acute awareness of what matters in life (relationships), a deep appreciation for nature and the outdoors, and am lucky enough to have a husband, family, and network of friends who share in my passions. Most of all, I have gained a deep sense of integrity from the experience, and an appreciation for *the journey and the struggle* to rebuild. It is a life-long journey, I'm convinced. But it's a deep one, filled with lots of inspiring people and some pretty cool adventures to share.



Through the dedication of the staff at Froedtert Health and the passion of survivors like Chris, Froedtert is now offering peer visitation to their trauma patients.

To read Chris's full story and find out more about the TSN at the Froedtert Medical Center go to [www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org](http://www.traumasurvivorsnetwork.org)